

(re) Define = Generosity 1. 31. 10

In 1996 I met Walt Tatham:

- By this time in life, he was now retired from Hughes Aircraft (after graduating the University of Maine as a Mechanical Engineer he'd moved to Tucson, AZ).
- Phenomenal servant - - he chose to work @ PCC as our maintenance engineer. Walt was the boldest evangelist on our pastoral team Prov. 28: 1 "...bold as a lion!"
 - Very practical - he & his wife Kitty lived in the Catalina Foothills in their home from the late 1950s or early 1960s.
 - Original décor = bright orange counter tops in kitchen, yellow & brown shag carpeting & bright blue & yellow walls.
 - Original furniture = that had never changed w/ time; short, long couches; surf-board coffee table; clutter covered every square inch of open space. NOT to mention 15 house cats 😊
 - ...on the walls hung simple cross-stitched pictures of Bible verses.
 - being a mechanical engineer Walt had every tool imaginable 😊

I learned so much from him but this was my most valuable lesson:

- Walt drove an old Datsun station wagon from the early 1970s, completely sun-baked from the desert heat, it ran & he was perfectly content with it 😊
 - One day he ran to the hardware store & when he came out of the store, his car was missing; it had been stolen.
 - I will never forget what Walt prayed, "Lord, your car has been stolen. You've got a problem."

I long to have this attitude this mindset faithfully trusting God

Bible says,

"The earth is the Lord's & everything in it. The world & all its people belong to Him."

There are (2) ways in which a Christ-follower may view their money:

1st view = "How much of my money shall I use for God?"

Or...

2nd view = "How much of God's money shall I use for myself?"

Today we are going to take a honest look @ the Bible, to see what GOD WANTS from us in regards to our giving.

I know that personal finance is a difficult topic that has been abused for years in the context of church. Today we will address 3 questions w/scripture:

1. WHY give? 2. WHAT is the biblical standard? 3. HOW much is required?

I. 1st question = WHY give?

A. Fundamental reason God wants us to give: not because He needs our money, but because He wants our hearts!

B. Giving has multiple purposes that help us to stay grounded in God:

1. (R) Deuteronomy 14: 23 or 5th book in O.T.

- Giving's purpose, "...it will teach you always to fear the Lord your God"
 - Giving is intended to train people to put God 1st in their lives. Because we give our 1st fruits (our 1st dollars) to God, it symbolizes the giving of one's whole life to God.
2. (R) Psalm 24: 1 or p. 423 in pew Bible
- Giving reminds us that all we have comes from God; God owns it all!
3. Giving is not God's way of raising money, it's His way of raising disciples!
- (R) Hosea 6: 6 or p. 682 in pew Bible
4. (R) I Corinthians 7: 20 – 24 or p. 874 in pew Bible
- Giving is a built in reminder of our unlimited debt to God.
- C.** (Question) Have you ever wondered why God has blessed all of us so richly?

God has richly blessed us not so we can live above others, but so that we can show ourselves to be His children by going down a few rungs on the social ladder & bringing up others up a few rungs.

VISION = we have chosen to live simply in order for others to 'Simply live.'

I believe many of us have forgotten how blessed we are because we have adjusted our lifestyles to the point, that our blessings have been turned into curses by debt.

We've completely forgotten how to measure our wealth. We measure wealth not by the things you have, but by the things you have for which you would not take money.

- D.** Andy Stanley writes in his book, Fields of Gold

"By nature, the concept of generosity is in direct conflict with concept of self-preservation. There's a point @ which your own generosity will pose a direct threat to your well being. When you became a Christian, you signed up for a completely different economic system. Whether you realize it or not, identifying with Christ entitles you to a very special compensation plan. So while the world around you perpetuates the idea of looking out for number one, Christ calls you instead to look out for the interests of others. In fact, He promises to take care of you while you do."

- E.** My prayer for God's church here @ 1685 N. 10th St.

"I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand & experience all the good things we have in Christ."
Philemon 1:6

- II. 2nd question = WHAT is the biblical standard?

- A.** If we look @ God's design for giving it starts with the tithe.

1. Some have come to believe the tithe is no longer applicable, but the Bible never says that.
 2. In fact no where in the N.T. does it indicate that tithing is no longer valid; with a single statement, God could have easily singled out tithing like He did sacrifices & the Sabbath, but God didn't do that.
 3. (Question) isn't tithing just an OT doctrine?
 - a. No = Now if tithing was only for O.T. Israelites & had no bearing or importance to anyone living during N.T. times or beyond, why would Jesus use the tithe as an illustration in Matt 23: 23; Lk 11: 42; 18:12
 - b. Jesus would never communicate a biblical truth with a false doctrine.
 - c. Jesus used the idea of tithing because it is a time-less biblical principle; Tithing (or giving a tenth) is mentioned no less than (7) times in Hebrews 7: 1 – 10.
 - d. Jesus is very specific about giving in Matthew 22: 21, "...give to God what belongs to God."
- B.** If you look carefully at what Jesus did to many aspects of the Law, He didn't reduce the requirements, He actually expanded them; such as...
1. N.T. it now is not only is it a sin to commit adultery or murder, etc. Jesus now teaches to even have those thoughts it is a sin.
 2. (Question) why would offer God something less that cost us nothing:
- C.** O.T. principle in II Samuel 24: 18 – 24 or p. 256 in pew Bible
- D.** Real personal = Becky & I have come to find out that the tithe is just the base-line of giving; she & I will never be able to repay our debt for all that God has done for our family.
1. She & I have chosen to re-write Dave Ramsey's quote, "...LIVE like no one else, so one day you can LIVE like no one else."
 2. Brock mantra now reads ~ not original but effective ☺ "...WE will live like no one else, so we can give like no one else!"
 3. We have chosen to cap our life-styles; for too long as God blessed our family with more, we continued to increase our standard of living; TODAY we continue to attempt to increase our standard of giving!
 - a. In 2009 we gave _____% of our income to God's Kingdom
 - b. Prayerfully in 2010 we will attempt to give Him _____%
 - c. Each of your elders + pastors also give @ least 10% of their income to God!
 - d. WE strongly believe we are conduits of God's grace to a world that is dying without Jesus.
 - e. Our financial resources are all apart of God's redemptive mission!

- f. WHY in 20-10 our church stepped it up one percentage point, so that today the 1st (12 cents) out of every dollar goes as our TITHE.

III. 3rd question = HOW much is required?

A. (re) Define ~ GENEROSITY

We strongly believe you '...can't out give God'

B. I challenge you today to prayerfully start TITHING today.

INSERT (Q) Hebrews 11: 6, "...w/out faith it is impossible to please God."

C. Go to www.wrcc.org homepage & click on the button entitled, "Try the Tithe" & begin a 90 day journey of faith like never before.

1. Sign up today, don't tell us how much your tithe is going to be, I don't need that personal information; I just want to help encourage you over the next (90)

2. INSERT data from 2009 class

D. BOOK MARK please keep in your Bible

Andy Stanley says,

"The crowning achievement of overcoming fear of giving is the moment you begin to experience the joy of giving. It's not so much about percentages or dollar amounts. It's more about a condition of the heart. You will know you've gotten beyond the fear of giving when you begin to experience joy in the act of giving!"